COVID-19 Post-Exposure Policy

Three Rivers Baptist Church

Prevention

1. We advise any churchgoer who exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to stay home. Symptoms include fever, chills, shortness of breath, cough, headaches, body aches, sinus congestion, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, and new loss of taste or smell.
2. We also advise churchgoers with household contact or other close contact to COVID-19 to stay home. Close contact is defined as less than 6 feet apart for 10-15 minutes, or if someone positive/symptomatic for COVID-19 coughs or sneezes directly on you, or a household contact. Churchgoers should consider themselves to have a positive exposure if they were in close contact with a symptomatic individual up to 48 hours prior to the start of their symptoms. Churchgoers who are healthcare workers may come into contact with COVID-19 positive patients regularly in the course of their occupation. Provided that proper PPE and infection-control procedures were utilized during the exposure, the choice of church attendance vs self-isolation will be left to the discretion of the healthcare worker.
3. If exposure to COVID-19 is known or suspected, we recommend the following based on current public health guidelines: 1) Stay home for 14 days after exposure and maintain social distancing during that time. 2) Self-monitor for symptoms and check temperature twice daily. 3) Avoid contact with higher risk people (Age over 65 and/or chronic health problems).

Intervention

1. If someone becomes ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while in a church gathering, they should be sent home or to a medical facility, whichever is appropriate.
2. The ill churchgoer should be promptly escorted out of the building while wearing a mask to decrease risk of transmission to others. Spare masks to be used for this purpose will be kept in the Conference Room with the other medical supplies. If it is not possible for them to quickly and/or safely leave the premises immediately, they can be removed to the designated sick room (Associate Pastor’s office) while arranging for their departure. This sick room should only be utilized if the person is unable to leave the building immediately. The ill person shall remain in the sick room until suitable transportation can be arranged. The ill person must wear a mask during any necessary movement through the church building, and any staff in contact with this person should also wear a mask. Church staff or leadership personnel will assist in ensuring that the ill person’s children are not left without adult supervision.
3. Avoid public transportation (i.e. taxi, Uber, etc.) when arranging transportation for a suspected ill person, to minimize exposure to transit workers.
4. Close off any areas where the ill person spent a prolonged period of time (i.e. nursing room, bathroom, etc.) and do not use the area until after proper cleaning and disinfection.
5. In the event a person diagnosed with or suspected of COVID-19 infection is determined to have been in the building while a church service is underway, it will be determined by the church leadership, with input from the healthcare team, whether it is appropriate to dismiss attendees for immediate cleaning and disinfecting procedures or wait until the current service concludes. This could involve cancellation of the 2nd service if the suspected exposure occurs during the 1st service. The healthcare team will be comprised of members in good standing who are healthcare providers, and who have agreed in advance to be available for each church service. This team will be available to church leadership for consultation regarding potential early church dismissal, service cancellations, and/or changes in current plans/practices due to churchgoers with suspicious symptoms and/or multiple recent positive COVID-19 diagnoses which could be indicative of a potential outbreak.
6. Current guidelines suggest that the church building be closed and wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting after someone suspected or confirmed positive for COVID-19 has been in the building. This will be up to the discretion of church leadership, and will take into account the degree of potential exposure.

Post-Exposure

1. Churchgoers are encouraged to immediately notify the church office staff of a known or suspected diagnosis of or close exposure to COVID-19. If unable to contact the church office staff for any reason, churchgoers should notify their flock elders and/or deacons.
2. If there is a confirmed/suspected exposure on the church campus in the past 7 days: Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for others being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas.
3. Follow current CDC/DHEC guidelines when cleaning and disinfecting facility. Normal operations can resume as soon as the cleaning and disinfection are completed.
4. If it has been 7 days or more since the sick person used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Continue routinely cleaning and disinfecting all high-touch surfaces in the facility.
5. Records will be kept for each church service with details of where each family unit was seated. All family units who were seated in close proximity to churchgoers suspected of or diagnosed with COVID-19 will be notified as soon as possible. If this record is unavailable for any reason, church staff will notify the church body via email of the approximate location of the ill person during the church service (i.e. Front Left Piano pew section). This information would be disseminated to allow churchgoers to take proper precautions if they were seated in the same section as the ill person. We encourage any churchgoers who may have been exposed to COVID-19 to contact their primary care provider for evaluation and medical guidance.
6. If the ill person grants express consent to release their name to the church body, that information may be released as well, in order to inform any others who may have had close contact with the ill person in another part of the facility. No personally identifiable information will be released without the express consent of the ill individual.
7. Symptomatic persons who tested positive for COVID-19 may not return to church until at least 10 days have passed from the start of their symptoms and it has been at least 3 days since their symptoms resolved. Asymptomatic persons who tested positive for COVID-19 may not return to church until at least 10 days have passed since their positive test result.
8. Church staff will notify local health officials via the statewide DHEC emergency contact number (1-888-847-0902) if a person newly or recently diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the facility.
9. Church staff will also notify and seek guidance from DHEC in the event that multiple churchgoers test positive for COVID-19 subsequent to a church service.

Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/3-17-20-faith-and-community-based-covid-19-faq.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fmass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>

<https://scdhec.gov/health-professionals/south-carolina-list-reportable-conditions>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html>